

FOREIGN MINISTER MATSUOKA'S REPLY OF FEB. 17 TO FOREIGN SECRETARY EDEN

His Imperial Japanese Majesty's Minister for Foreign Affairs is rather surprised to learn about the undue concern shown on the part of His Britannic Majesty's Principal Secretary for Foreign Affairs which is, no doubt, based upon information emanating from the British Embassy in Tokyo and other sources. There is, of course, no way to ascertain what kind of information the British Government has been receiving, but the Minister for Foreign Affairs would like to avail himself of this opportunity to state that so far as he can see there is no ground for entertaining such alarming views on the situation in East Asia.

On more than one occasion the Minister for Foreign Affairs has explained to the British Ambassador in Tokyo and even to the public at large that one of the primary purposes of the Tripartite Pact is to limit the sphere of the European war by preventing those Powers not engaged in hostilities at present from joining the war and also to bring about its termination as quickly as possible. The Japanese Government has so far found no reason or occasion to alter this avowed aim which constitutes a fundamental basis of its policy. The British Government may rest assured on this point.

However, the Minister for Foreign Affairs feels obliged to say candidly that he cannot help entertaining a certain amount of anxiety, if not misgivings, on the movements of the British and American Governments in their attempt to expedite and enlarge warlike preparations with an eye to meeting supposed contingencies in the Pacific and the South Seas. Press reports about these movements originating from American sources and elsewhere are causing increasing misgivings in Japan with the consequence that in some quarters it is even contended that Japan should lose no time in taking measures to meet the worst eventuality in these regions. The concern felt is quite natural in the face of these disturbing reports. If the American Government could only be persuaded to restrict its activities to the Western Hemisphere, and prudently avoid causing unnecessary anxiety to the Japanese, the situation would indeed be very much mitigated.

Having had the privilege of forming personal acquaintanceship at Geneva with His Britannic Majesty's Principal Secretary for Foreign Affairs and prompted by the belief that a general exchange of frank views at this juncture will be of some service in enabling the two nations to see eye to eye, the Minister for Foreign Affairs wishes to take the liberty of making further observations. The uppermost thought in my mind has always been world peace. He sincerely hopes that on the one hand, the China Affair will be brought to an end as soon as possible and on the other, the European war will see an early termination. It is my earnest and constant prayer that the powers may gather again to discuss at a round table their differences and disputes and deliberate on the great question of organizing an

enduring peace upon a just and equitable world order. In this connection, I desire to assure my eminent colleague that far from aspiring to control the destinies of, or to dominate, other peoples, it is Japan's established policy to inaugurate an era of peace and plenty and mutual helpfulness throughout the region of Greater East Asia by promoting the spirit of concord and conciliation. As repeatedly affirmed, Japan's motto is "no conquest, no oppression, no exploitation." I, therefore, strongly deprecate those biased reports designed to calumniate Japan.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs frankly confesses his utter inability to see any good purposes served by prolonging the war whatever the motive. Whatever the outcome, whoever the victor, there are present in the world situation, especially in Europe, elements of great danger such as would bring about a fearful state of chaos and confusion, possibly eventuating in the downfall of modern civilization. It takes statesmanship of a high order to foresee and meet in time such catastrophic contingency. The Minister for Foreign Affairs has not lost hope yet that such statesmanship is not wanting in the British Empire.

Lastly, the Minister for Foreign Affairs would like to make it clear that Japan, deeply concerned as she is with an early restoration of peace, is fully prepared to act as a mediator, not only in Greater East Asia but anywhere the world over, or to take whatever action is calculated to recover normal conditions.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs trusts that His Britannic Majesty's Principal Secretary for Foreign Affairs will not hesitate to share with him the conviction that upon the shoulders of the leading Powers rests the great and grave responsibility of restoring peace and saving modern civilization from the impending collapse. Such a responsibility can only be fulfilled by a wise and courageous statesmanship willing to display an accommodating and generous spirit in listening to others' claims and contentions. It is hardly necessary to add that whatever Japan may do, she will always be actuated by the consciousness of the responsibility she owes to Humanity.

C E R T I F I C A T E

W.D.C. No. _____

I.P.S. No. 1339A (5)Statement of Source and Authenticity

I, HAYASHI Kaoru hereby certify
that I am officially connected with the Japanese Government in the
following capacity. Chief of the Archives Section, Japanese
Foreign Office

and that as such official I have custody of the document hereto
attached consisting of Six pages, dated 17 February, 1941, and
described as follows: _____

FOREIGN MINISTER MATSUOKA'S REPLY OF FEB. 17 TO FOREIGN SECRETARY
EDEN

I further certify that the attached record and document is an official
document of the Japanese Government, and that it is part of the
official archives and files of the following named ministry or
department (specifying also the file number or citation, if any,
or any other official designation of the regular location of the
document in the archives or files): Foreign Ministry

Signed at Tokyo on this21st day of Sept., 1946

/s/ K. Hayashi
Signature of Official

Witness: /s/ Nagaharu Odo

SEAL
Chief, Archives Sect
Official Capacity

C E R T I F I C A T E

Statement of Official Procurement

I, Richard H. Larsh, hereby certify that I
am associated with the General Headquarters of the Supreme Commander
for the Allied Powers, and that the above described document was
obtained by me from the above signed official of the Japanese
Government in the conduct of my official business.

Signed at Tokyo on this

25 day of September, 1946.

/s/Richard H. Larsh
NAME

Witness: /s/i/4 T. Toguchi

Investigation Division I.P.S.
Official Capacity